



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Maryland's Social Services Agency



PRESS RELEASE

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DHR DEMONSTRATES SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR BENEFITS PROGRAMS; FILES REPORT WITH CIRCUIT COURT TODAY

BALTIMORE – The Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) reported today that it has significantly reduced the time it takes to process applications for food stamps; medical assistance; temporary cash assistance; and health insurance for children.

In the wake of the weakened national economy, social services agencies across the country have seen a dramatic increase in applications for programs that help poverty stricken individuals and families make ends meet. From 2000 through 2005, DHR experienced a 38 percent increase in the number of persons enrolled in the federal food stamp program. From 2006 through today, the agency has seen a 116 percent increase in enrollment.

“We are processing more applications and telling people whether they qualify a lot quicker than we did a year ago,” explained Brian Wilbon, Interim Secretary of DHR. “This is a government success story in which the O’Malley/Brown Administration has demonstrated clear data-driven results for those in need.”

The new numbers come from the [Compliance Report](#) DHR filed earlier today with the Circuit Court of Baltimore City. In December 2009, after two women sued the agency because their applications for food stamps and other benefits were not processed within the timelines required by the federal and State law, a circuit court judge ordered DHR be in full compliance with all federal and State time requirements for processing applications for the programs at issue within 12 months. Noting that delays will inevitably occur in the processing of some applications, the court defined full compliance as requiring the State to be within a 4 percent margin of error statewide for each of the programs at issue, i.e., to process at least 96 percent of the applications in a timely manner. The State has met that goal.

In December 2009, DHR processed about 83 percent of applications for the various benefits programs within 30 days. Today, the agency reports that it is processing more than 97 percent of applications within the 30-day window.

For the last year, agency leaders, front-line workers and managers have retooled the application intake process, improved procedures at processing centers, hired temporary staff and approved overtime work hours to reduce the time it takes to process applications.

- Martin O’Malley, Governor
- Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor
- Brian Wilbon, Interim Secretary

“We have an obligation to provide assistance to those less fortunate and we have absolutely no intention of letting up on progress,” said Wilbon. “We are committed to ensuring that our reforms endure and our compliance rates remain high – even in the face of a growing caseload.”

Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA)

November 2009: 5,107 applications processed	85 percent processed in 30 days
November 2010: 6,530 applications processed	97 percent processed in 30 days

- **28 percent increase in applications**
- **12 percentage-point increase in compliance rate**

Food Stamps (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program)

November 2009: 17,592 applications processed	84 percent compliance rate
November 2010: 17,538 applications processed	97 percent compliance rate

- **13 percentage-point increase in compliance rate**

Expedited Food Stamps

November 2009: 7,926 applications processed	94 percent compliance rate
November 2010: 9,889 applications processed	97 percent compliance rate

- **25 percent increase in applications**
- **3 percentage-point increase in compliance rate**

Medical Assistance (MA)

November 2009: 12,433 applications processed	86 percent compliance rate
November 2010: 15,322 applications processed	98 percent compliance rate

- **23 percent increase in applications**
- **12 percentage-point increase in compliance rate**

Maryland Children’s Health Insurance Program (MCHP)

November 2009: 3,872 applications processed	78 percent compliance rate
November 2010: 5,102 applications processed	98 percent compliance rate

- **32 percent increase of applications**
- **20 percentage-point increase in compliance rate**

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The Maryland Department of Human Resources is the state’s social service provider. The agency collaborates with 24 local jurisdictions to: provide foster care, adoption, and protective services to children; collect and distribute child support payments; provide protective services, case- management, supportive housing, in-home aide services, and respite care to vulnerable adults; and provide temporary cash, food stamps, and medical assistance to families. It also funds programs for homeless persons, refugees, and migrant- workers, victims of crime and women who are displaced, battered, or assaulted. Last year, DHR served 760,000 people in need. In terms of its annual budget, DHR is Maryland’s fifth largest state agency.